

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LENDING 01945 091415Z

22

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /055 W

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R 091326Z DEC 76

FM AMCONGEN LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2834

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, EEW, UR

SUBJ: RUMORED INCREASE IN PRICE OF BOOKS APPARENTLY TRUE

1. SUMMARY: IT IS NOW ALMOST CERTAIN THAT A RUMOR OF AN INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF BOOKS IS TRUE. AN EMPLOYEE OF ONE BOOKSTORE AND MANAGER OF ANOTHER CONFIRMED EARLIER RUMORS THAT THERE WOULD BE AN INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF BOOKS. END SUMMARY.

2. BOOKSTORE EMPLOYEE CORROBORATED EARLIER RUMOR THAT A PRICE INCREASE FOR BOOKS OF "TWO TIMES" WILL OCCUR JANUARY 1. MANAGER OF ANOTHER BOOKSTORE WOULD NOT CITE A FIGURE BUT SAID THAT IT WOULD DEPEND ON THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF BOOKS. EMPLOYEE SAID THAT SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS WOULD BE EXEMPT. SHE DEMURRED WHEN ASKED IF POLITICAL BOOKS, AS RUMOR HAD IT, WOULD BE EXEMPT. A BOOKSTORE MANAGER SAID THAT ALL OF THE PAMPHLETS PRINTED ON CHEAP "GRAY" PAPER WOULD BE EXEMPT.

3. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH THE EXACT TERMS OF THE PRICE INCREASE AND ALSO THE REASONS FOR IT. TWO REASONS CITED INCLUDE COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGE AT AN INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR TO BE HELD IN MOSCOW IN THE SPRING OF 1977 AND COST OF PRODUCTION, ESPECIALLY OF HIGHER-QUALITY PUBLICATIONS. AT TWO SITES CONGEN
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OFFICER TOLD THAT NO OR FEW BOOKS WERE PUBLISHED

DURING PAST MONTH. QUERIED WHETHER PUBLISHERS MIGHT
SIMPLY HOLD BACK FOR HIGHER JANUARY PRICES, SALESGIRL
NOTED THAT AFTERALL, QTE WE HAVE OUR PLAN END QUOTE
(PRESUMABLY TO BE FULFILLED).

4. COMMENT: GIVEN LOW PRICE OF SOVIET BOOKS, COST
ARGUMENTS SOUND CONVINCING AND AS OTHER SOVIET
PRODUCTS, A COST-MOTIVATED PRICE INCREASE MAY WELL
BE LONG OVERDUE. FURTHERMORE, AUTHORITIES MAY BE
SEARCHING FOR THE LEAST CONTROVERSIAL PRICE RISES
POSSIBLE, HAVING POINTED OUT IN THE PRESS THAT MORE
BASIC CONSUMER GOODS ARE UNDERPRICED. END COMMENT.
NEUBERT

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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